

/75 cont./

14

732

They are certainly not types of beauty, and some, with old age and wrinkles, become frankly ugly. Among the eight or ten thousand individuals we saw, however, none were deformed (12).

12. Koch Grünberg (Zwei Jahre, 179) in Parí-cachoeira met a midget, about 15 or 18 years old and measuring 107 centimeters in height, playing with the children. His parents, already dead (1903), were of normal stature.

[847]

Among the youngest there are even attractive types, and on the older ones touches of a serene majesty. It is true that the crippled and the deformed are eliminated at birth (cases that are rare, according to what we found) (13).

13. We know of several cases of crippling. Because of the lack of statistics, we could not say what percentage they represent in the sparse population of these rivers. It seemed to us, however, that they are all consequences of falls while young, or of infantile paralysis.

4

We have thus sketched a Mongoloid type, brachycephalic, lisso-trichous, platyrrhinian, slightly prognathic, morphologically mixed, pyknic-athletic, quite close to the norm.

732

/76/ There are somewhat frequent cases of evolutive retardation in early childhood, and even of true rachitis, accompanied at times by mental debility (14).

14. We also regret here the lack of statistical data that would present to us the percentage of pathological cases. We found in Parí-cachoeira in 1957 two female children with rachitis and mental debility, admitted to the hospital. One eight years old from the Desana tribe, and the other, Tukano, 14 years old. Both,

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/footnote 14 cont./ due to weakness of the organs, were not able to walk until five years of age, after long treatment. Among the cases of pronounced hebetude, we recall two adults of the male sex, one from the Huhúdeñe tribe in Uapum-cachoeira (river Aiarí), and the other a Taryana of Iauareté, known as Marcelino, "Contented," because he laughs at anything.

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Completing this profile, it should be noted that they are slow of movement, at times clumsy in their way of walking. They walk with a short step (15),

15. In the military formations of the children, at one of the schools of the Salesian Missions, we could verify the tendency to accelerate the march.

like small jumps; many drag slightly and set the tip of the toes apart laterally, and the heel barely touches the ground.

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They do not remain on their feet very long, almost always leaning more on one foot (the left one) and just on the tip of the other one. The woman withstands being on her feet less than the man. The most common and lasting position, when still, is the squat; it is the normal position for eating, even when they could do it sitting down. When they sit, they prefer low seats or the ground, and then they never cross the legs.

Let us now note some features that vary in this profile that we have sketched.

2) Pirá-tapuya type.

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Skin lighter than in the Tukano, and face slightly or markedly elongated. Zygoma less prominent. Lissotrichous hair, lighter brown.

/426 cont./

842 The interval, as we have already noted, is regularly two or three years between deliveries.

1) Abortion and infanticide.

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In spite of the fact that they want children, they induce abortion and practice infanticide. When the sterilizing potions have not been enough, they resort to abortion; for this there are the Pucangas, which the woman herself or her mother-in-law prepares. When these are not successful either, the mechanical process is tried, in order to kill the fetus and abort it, going so far as stepping on the belly of the pregnant woman. And if, in spite of this, the unwanted child is born alive, it is eliminated, being buried alive (36).

[115]

36. The Missionary Pe. João Marchesi, with a tirocinio of almost 40 years among the tribes of the Uaupés, stigmatizes "the cynicism with which they bury alive the newborn children, suffocating them as if it were being done to any little animal" (ap. Os Tucanos /The Tucano/, p. 26).

And as a rule it will be the mother herself who will do it. Perhaps the burial alive indicates a certain feeling, conceiving it as a pleasanter death. In fact they line the grave delicately with banana leaves (37).

[115]

[732]

37. Among the most repugnant is the episode narrated by Pe. Afonso Kuipers, which happened in the povoado of Africa, left bank of the Papurí, Colombia. A child of about eight years of age, deformed with a huge head, was buried standing up; and since the grave was small, the mother stepped on the head, out of the ground, "in order to bury more and not continue crying."